

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Canceled)
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21. (Canceled)
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- 23. (Canceled)
- 24. (Canceled)
- 25. (Canceled)
- 26. (Previously presented) A method of filling an endodontically prepared root canal of a tooth comprising:

applying filler material to the external surface of a distal portion of an elongated structural shaft, the shaft having sufficient rigidity to serve as a vehicle for carrying said filler material into lowermost portions of a root canal;

inserting said proximal portion of said shaft having said filler material thereon into the root canal; and

applying a beam in the form of a stream of energy traveling through air to said shaft to heat said shaft and cause the surface tension of said filler material to substantially decrease to cause said filler material to fill the root canal and allow said shaft to be removed leaving said filler material in the root canal.

- 27. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 26 including:

affixing a signal generating temperature sensor to said shaft and using a signal generated by said temperature sensor to control said application of said beam of energy to said shaft.

- 28. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 26 wherein said shaft is of metal.

- 29. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 26 wherein said shaft is of plastic or fiberglass.

- 30. (Canceled)

- 31. (Canceled)

- 32. (Canceled)
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- 39. (Canceled)
- 40. (Canceled)
- 41. (Canceled)
- 42. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 26 wherein said step of applying a beam of energy to said shaft is accomplished employing electromagnetic energy.
- 43. (Canceled)
- 44. (Canceled)
- 45. (Canceled)
- 46. (Canceled)
- 47. (Canceled)
- 48. (Canceled)
- 49. (Canceled)